

VETERANS MEMORIAL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES FROM APRIL 15, 2011

The following are Minutes from the Veterans Memorial Committee held in the Community Room at City Hall on Friday, April 15, 2011 at 7:30 a.m.

Volunteers in attendance:

Chairman Mike Goergen, Frank Cardarelle, Marshall Schwartz, Robert Reed, Jason Christiaansen, Bob Kojetin, John Lonsbury, Barbara Bender, Herb Lefler, Bob Benson

Volunteers unable to attend:

Justin Kieffer

Staff in attendance:

John Keprios, Edina Park and Recreation Department Director
Janet Canton, Edina Park and Recreation Office Coordinator

I. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 18, 2011 MINUTES

Approval of the March 18, 2011 Veterans Memorial Committee minutes will take place at the next meeting due to the fact they were not done in enough time for the committee members to look over.

II. WELCOME EDINA GARDEN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Goergen welcomed the representatives from the Edina Public Art Committee (EPAC) and from the Edina Garden Council. He indicated that as they proceed during the next few months they are going to be relying heavily on both groups for their expertise and input.

III. DESIGN CONCEPTS – BOB KOST AND VERONICA ANDERSON WITH SEH

Bob Kost, architect, asked the committee if they have decided anything regarding the art piece focal point such as whether it would be figurative, modern or symbolic. Mr. Goergen replied that they did discuss the issue to great length at their last meeting and have decided against a human figurine. He noted that they kind of keyed in on potentially an eagle figure in either bronze or stone and perhaps on a pedestal or column of granite to support the eagle. He stated that beyond that they have not narrowed it down.

Mr. Kost informed the committee that also with him today is Veronica Anderson and Rachel Baudler who is a graduate student intern from the University of Minnesota who will be sitting in on the meeting. He noted that from their perspective the focus right now really needs to be with determining the exact location within Utley Park. Mr. Kost showed the committee a map of the site and pointed out three places from their perspective where they think it would be appropriate for the memorial feature. Mr. Kost went through and explained each of the three sites.

Mr. Kost revisited the various components they recently talked about regarding the Veterans memorial:

1. Three or possibly four flags.
2. Focal point such as a sculpture of an eagle
3. Gathering space to set up podium
4. Accessible hard surface
5. Walkways & Plaza
6. Area for contemplation with benches
7. Some kind of display to feature tablets
8. Have the 5 military service emblems and quotations to thank and honor the veterans
9. Seasonal plantings

Mr. Schwartz asked Mr. Kost if he is including recognition of those who have been killed in the same area in the memorial that gives thanks to veterans. Mr. Kost replied that is something the committee will need to tell them. Mr. Schwartz stated that it is an integral part of the plan and they should plan on approximately 30 veterans that were killed. Mr. Goergen pointed out that their thought is that it's a separate entity from the thank you to the veterans. He noted maybe there could be a few scripted sentences because they are not only thanking all of the veterans but the families and community as well as trying to balance the future of those who will serve. It's a separate entity from specific recognition of those who were killed while in service it's almost two-fold.

Mr. Kost informed the committee that on work they've done with other memorials some groups have liked to list names alphabetically while others prefer to list them non-alphabetically. He suggested not doing it alphabetically so that names can always be added in the future. He also pointed out to the committee that they will probably want to do it in stone and not bronze because it's not hard to pull the stone off and send it back and have it engraved.

Mr. Kost showed the committee the four different location concepts they came up with.

Mr. Schwartz informed Mr. Kost that he has talked about the five services several times but that there is a small chance that they may be including the Merchant Marines so there is a possibility there could be six. To date they have not found anyone and the odds are very small that they will; however at this point they still cannot rule that out.

The committee asked Mr. Kost questions regarding the site and location concepts.

Mr. Cardarelle commented that visibility is very important wherever the memorial ends up and thinks they need to make sure that it is visible from 50th Street.

Mr. Keprios pointed out that in addition to being highly visible they also would like it to be easily accessible, as short a distance from the parking lot as they can make it and obviously it needs to be handicapped accessible. He noted that it also needs to be large enough so they can have gatherings but it doesn't all have to be on hardscape, it can feather out into the grass. He indicated that he thinks the real challenge is going to try to make it a place

for private reflection as well as there is a balance between that and being highly visible an area for large gatherings.

Mr. Kojetin pointed out that they should also keep in mind that Wooddale and 50th Street has almost as much traffic as 50th Street because there are a lot of residents that go by on Wooddale.

Mr. Lonsbury suggested, because some members need to leave early, that as a committee each person could express their top pick just to get a read of where everyone is at. He noted this way they would not need to spend a lot of time on a site that no one wants. A show of hands revealed:

Site 1 – 2 members' first choice

Site 2 – 4 members' first choice

Site 3 - 4 members' first choice

Mr. Kost made the suggestion that he be put on the agenda for their next meeting for just a short period of time. He noted that between now and the next meeting hopefully all of the committee members will get a chance to walk around the park and look at the different sites with the concepts so you can get a better feel for it. He indicated at that meeting maybe the committee will have a better idea of the direction they want to go, do you want an eagle, do you want a fourth flag at the entrance and try to narrow things down. Mr. Kost stated that should still give him sufficient time to really start working the design. He noted then when they come back they will have a palate of potential material; bricks, stone, steel, etc., and then start to lay out the design in term of trails, gardens, plantings and those sorts of things.

Mr. Cardarelle commented that he thinks site 2 is the best site because it has ideal parking as well as more open space for special functions.

V. Standing Committee Reports

- A. Fundraising/Treasurer – Mr. Goergen asked Mr. Lefler what he needs to continue on his fundraising plan. Mr. Lefler replied they need to identify the assets they have on this committee in terms of raising money. He explained that it takes a certain approach and once they've identified the people who are going to do it and the companies they are going to approach they need to get their foot in the door and be able to deal with them on a fairly professional basis. He noted that he thinks the question for the committee is do we have the capacity to do this ourselves or do we need to enlist somebody else to help them. Mr. Lefler pointed out that they don't have a lot of time to raise this money. He stated that he suspects there will be one approach for donors of a certain level and there will be another approach for donors at lesser levels. He commented that the question is what can the committee do versus what do they need help in doing. Mr. Lefler indicated he thinks initially they need to find out what they are capable of doing and be real honest about their capability because they don't have a lot of time, so get an assessment of their capabilities first, getting a concept and then if

they feel they can't handle it themselves to talk to someone and see if they would be willing to help them.

Mr. Goergen informed the committee that Richard Olson, Chair of the Fourth of July Committee, has offered to give them any expertise or advice he has, not necessarily involvement. He noted that Mr. Olson is the person in charge of fundraising at Benilde-St. Margaret School. Mr. Goergen indicated that his first thought is let's look at a plan and then bring him in; however, he may be able to assess what they need and indirectly what they have. Mr. Lefler commented that he would be happy to talk to Mr. Olson. Mr. Goergen pointed out that they also have General Schulstad who has indicated to him that he can identify substantial contributors and make the introduction but will not be a part of the presentation. Mr. Keprios suggested to the committee that they call a meeting with the Fundraising/Treasurer Committee, Richard Olson and Dick Crockett. Mr. Schwartz suggested that they also include the person that was mentioned at last month's meeting, Todd Tepple, who has offered his expertise in fundraising to which Mr. Keprios replied now would definitely be a good time to include him.

Mr. Kojetin commented that they are kind of sitting in the middle before they really have a plan. He asked are they going to market a plan they are going to settle on or are they being a little premature. He indicated that he thinks they are trying to rush this and added that he doesn't think it's going to be completed in two years. He asked how do they market it when they don't have a plan because it would be difficult asking a company for money when they don't have a plan to show them. Mr. Goergen replied that he would like to see Mr. Lefler and his committee be proactive so that they can be up and running when they get to that point. He stated that he thinks they are way behind the curve if they wait two, three, four, six months for the final plan and then say let's come up with a fundraising/marketing plan. He commented that he was trying to be proactive by getting the committee together and decided on a rough plan.

Mr. Lonsbury stated that the underlying question is what are our expectations because if the plan is to meet with the architects every other month they may not have drawings for six months, are they going to have a concept by the end of the summer. He stated that in his opinion it's pretty tough to get people excited and enthusiastic about something and say okay now wait for three months while we figure this out. He pointed out that the reason he hasn't been crazy about the marketing is because they have nothing to talk about yet. He added that he thought they would be a lot further along today and asked whether they are going to wait until October to have something or are they going to have something in June. He stated that he thinks that is a fair question for the committee to ask the architect. He added that he absolutely thinks they need to be working ahead of time but they don't want to be so far ahead of time that they are sitting here after getting everybody fired up and then go make calls and say well now you have to wait four months because they are going to lose interest. Mr. Lonsbury indicated that the bigger question is what are the expectations for having something that we can go talk to the community about.

Mr. Christiaansen asked the committee if they could talk to the architect and say if they are able to pick a site at the next meeting, how long would it take for them to come up

with a design and then go ahead with the marketing material. Mr. Lonsbury replied that again they need to see how long it's going to take for them to get preliminary drawings before they can start marketing and fundraising.

IV. WELCOME EDINA GARDEN COUNCIL AND EDINA PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Keprios asked the Edina Garden Council and the Edina Public Art Committee (EPAC) representatives to each introduce themselves.

Barbara La Valleur indicated that she was appointed to the EPAC the end of January. She noted that she is a photojournalist by profession, has lived in Edina for six years and loves the Promenade and Edina Art Center.

Diane Hedges, Director Edina Art Center, indicated that she has been the Director for the Art Center for 25 years and that she is very interested in what the committee is doing for the Veterans Memorial. She noted that her father is a WWII veteran and her husband is a Vietnam War Veteran and that she applauds the committee for what they are doing.

Lois Ring, Chair of the EPAC, stated that she would encourage the committee to think about the design element of what the artist could do and at this point maybe don't limit it to an eagle but explore what some of the other possibilities could be. She indicated that artists are so creative and you might love some of their concepts. Mr. Goergen asked how the process works for finding artists. Ms. Ring informed the committee that the EPAC has a list of sculptors and they could ask them for simple drawings and see what concepts they come up with. She noted that you could list some limitations but not the subject and see what happens. Ms. Hedges added that you could state you are not looking for a human figurative. Mr. Goergen asked if they did that approach would they be ahead by saying we would like their ideas on an eagle plus other potential symbols. He noted the committee has discussed this to some length and an eagle seems to be coming to a forefront as a universal symbol for several reasons. Mr. Keprios pointed out they have not voted on that. Ms. Ring replied that it could be mentioned. Mr. Goergen asked what kind of a time frame they are looking at to which Ms. Hedges replied they could do an RFP right away and mail it out as well as put it on-line.

Mr. Keprios pointed out that one of the challenges the committee will have is they only have \$30,000 to spend and they are going to spend it all on the architect. There will be no money for an artist or sculptor until it's fundraised. Ms. Ring responded that at this point she was just thinking of sketches so the artist could not have a lot of time in it and then you would do another step after that.

Mr. Reed indicated that most artists when given broad parameters can come up with ideas. He noted they just need to state this is a Veterans Memorial; we do not want it dated, it's for the past, present and future and they do not want a figurine. He commented they may come up with some wonderful concepts that they never even thought about. Mr. Keprios commented that it has been repeated many times that they should get an artist before an

architect; however, he thinks this timing is still good because they are the very beginning stages.

Ruth Valgame indicated that she is on the Art Center Board as well as the EPAC and is very interested in this project. She asked the committee how much they are thinking of getting the larger community involved whether it's an aspect for fundraising or something else. Mr. Keprios replied that is yet to be determined. He noted that the committee has done a great job advertising to anyone who wanted to apply to which they have an unbelievably good group of volunteers. Ms. Valgame stated that he was thinking more in terms of getting individuals in the community or school groups, scout groups, churches, etc., who are interested in contributing raising money for the memorial. Mr. Keprios stated that is a good idea.

Mr. Kojetin pointed out that they need to remember that one of the things they talked about was that the memorial is for everyone and not just the military and people who were actually in battles.

Mr. Schwartz informed the committee that he has a very interesting statistic. He noted that during WWII in Minnesota the casualty rate was approximately .28 which meant for every 350 people who were servicing one died from Minnesota. He noted for Edina the causality rate was .43 which means for every 230 people service one died. Mr. Schwartz indicated that if you assume there is a direct correlation between the number of people serving and the number that died Edina was half again more involved as a community in WWII than the average community in Minnesota. He stated that is a pretty high rate when you think there were only 5,800 people in Edina in 1940. He commented that just about every family in Edina had a blue star or were living next door to a house that had a blue star in the window.

Lisa Nelson, Secretary of the Edina Garden Council, introduced herself, Karen Platt who is the treasurer and Ellen Jones who is a member of the Garden Council as well as she is a member of the Park Board. Ms. Nelson indicated that she was glad that something was said about the blue star because that is one of the reasons they are here is to offer up a possibility of including a Blue Star Marker at Utley park. She informed the committee that since the end of WWII the Edina Garden Council has been a member of the National Garden Clubs. She stated that since the end of WWII the National Garden Clubs have had a Blue Star Marker program where the garden clubs still make Blue Star Markers. She noted that she has a brochure that she will leave with the chairman. She informed the committee that the Garden Council would be willing to use their money to donate a Blue Star Marker, is it something that would be installed on a rock or a post or a column or whatever is appropriate if it fits into the design of the park as a whole and the memorial aspect of the design. Ms. Nelson also pointed out that the Edina Garden Council raise most of the plants and flowers that are in the city parks and they would be more than happy to help with the garden design and garden planting.

Ms. Jones informed the committee that her father was a veteran who is buried at the Lincoln National Cemetery in Illinois. She noted one of the really nice things they have is a place for families to wander and contemplate and the place you are talking about sounds

very stationary. She asked the committee to consider something like that as they design the park for the memorial.

Mr. Kojetin asked if there is something in the long range planning for having the bathrooms redone at Utley Park and if not maybe look at somehow trying to put it in the budget. He stated that there needs to be a park plan and maybe have some conversations with the architect. He noted that they've talked about what's going to be the future of this park besides the memorial. He commented that that conversation should be held between somebody who would design the park and think about the memorial at the same time. He noted that they are concentrating so much on the memorial that they are all in an essence looking at taking over the whole park and the Park Board may say we don't want to take the whole park and turn it into a memorial they want an area just for the park too. Mr. Kojetin stated that he would like the Park Board to have a conversation and see what they think about for the future of the park; are there tennis courts and basketball court going to be there all the time. He pointed out that the watershed district is going to be moving the canoe landing to a different location because it's deteriorating so people will be walking through the memorial to put their canoes in the creek and they don't want that. He stated that he thinks this should be given some thought.

Ms. Jones indicated that she appreciates that and it is something they need to seek some clarity on; is this going to become less of a neighborhood park and become a veteran's memorial park. She noted that this is the first time she has heard that you are talking about extending the veterans memorial to not just the veterans. Mr. Keprios pointed out that maybe the Park Board might want to consider that the section of the park they are looking at becomes Veterans Park and the remainder stays Utley Park, just a thought.

Ms. Jones replied it could be Memorial Park with Veterans and then have the Veterans Memorial in Memorial park which would honor the community as a whole. Mr. Kojetin explained that Utley Park is considered the Country Club Park because 30 years ago it was a big concern because the County Club area had no park on the east side of Highway 100, Browndale Park was too small. However, once the school was destroyed they had Wooddale Park but they still look at Utley Park as the park where that community goes and explained this why be brought the issue up because it really should be considered.

Mr. Schwartz informed the committee he has now identified 33 people who deserve serious consideration that have not yet been approved by the committee as a whole but have met the established criteria. He indicated that one person was killed during the opening minutes of WWII at Pearl Harbor on the Arizona and one person died within 48 hours of the end of WWII. The war had essentially stopped and there was a whole SS crew that led an attack and he was killed. Mr. Schwartz again pointed out that this community was very, very committed and very involved and having this memorial will do so much to bring everything together.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 am